The Christian Minister, the Man of God:

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

GRADUATING CLASS OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL

IN

HARVARD UNIVERSITY,

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DISCOURSE.

1 Tim. iii. 17: "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Brothers of the Graduating Class of the Divinity School, —

It is just twenty-five years — though it sounds to me, too, fabulous in part, and partly reproachful — since the midsummer Sunday evening, when, summoned, as you are, to exchange the "pleasing shade" of this green cloister of the Muses for life's toil and Christ's warfare, I also sat, as you now sit, only in a dearer place than this, — even that little white chapel yonder, which stands in my memory like the very beauty of holiness, — and waited to hear from the lips of an elder brother, a father in the ministry, (and late may he be gathered to the fathers!) the word of sympathy, of strengthening, and of counsel. Twenty-five years; and I stand here, in my turn, not now to receive, but myself to render like service to young men of almost another generation. Twenty-five years; and yet, such a shadowy thing is time to the spirit (sometimes, alas! a heavy shadow), I feel more as if I were standing side by side with you on the threshold of the sacred office, than as if I were called to send the voice of experience over to you across what seems beforehand the vast period of a quarter of a century. I certainly do not feel as if I were old enough to assume the fatherly tone of charge

and counsel; and I doubt whether I am wise enough to meet such questions as you may naturally enough wish, though perhaps not so certainly most need, to have answered.

"Days should speak," it is most true, "and multitude of years teach wisdom." Yes: but to him especially who has lived or is living in them; and the best instruction they impart is while they are going by. No man, no generation, can be wise for another, in the highest and vital sense of the word. *You* certainly will not appeal to any human authority, whatever loved or venerated form it may wear of wisdom or of holiness, to be assured what the faith of Christ is which you are to preach; for *that* every one whom Christ calls to liberty and responsibility is to find out (if I must not say, to *fight* out) for himself. Often do I find occasion in this recreant age — recreant, I say, for one occupying such a vantage-ground — to call to mind those noble words of Paul: "Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy; for by faith [that is, finally, by your own personal *faithfulness*] ye stand." I confess to you, brothers, even when I stand before my own people, — how much more when preachers are my hearers! — I feel like a learner rather than a teacher. I know there is a dread in this unsettled time, and I fear it damps the ardor of many even in the home of spiritual liberty, lest the aspiration of a truth-loving spirit should expose them to the charge of "ever learning, yet never coming to the knowledge of the truth." But to come *to* the knowledge of truth is one thing; to come to the *end* of that knowledge is another: and we must not let any thing make us ignore the privilege and the obligation to "grow in . . . the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," who *is* the Truth and the Life.

What, then, can I do for you, my brothers? What can I say to you? What can I draw from the stores of my experience, confident that it will be the word, or a word, which you need to hear? How fast the character of the times changes, and, with it, the form of the trial which faith has in all times to

encounter! and how many-sided is the truth which is to answer the soul's and society's changing wants! And then how individual, especially in our free church of the spirit, is apt to be each minister's, each man's, real history, from which, after all, his most valuable, only vital, word of truth must come!

Now, therefore, brothers, I ask with one of old, "for what intent ye have sent for me." For if I had supposed that you wished or wanted one, for instance, to show you how to put Unitarianism into a new, palpable, and portable creed, so as to meet a vague and self-inconsistent demand of many at the present day; or to advise you how to revive the decaying prestige of the priestly profession among us; or to put you in a way of building up the church after a form such as ecclesiastical statistics can estimate and exhibit; or to instruct you how to be sure, by some visible and definable test, whether your labors are having an effect on the souls of men, — if I had presumed that you desired of me any such service, I never should have been willing to accept your invitation.

I shall assume that you have asked me to come and extend to you, as a brother, the hand of fellowship and the word of hearty welcome to the noblest calling known among men, of whose true beauty, privilege, and power, men even yet know so little; that you have called me, as one born and bred in the City of Peace, half whose life has been spent in the Island of Peace, to come and remind you, who are just bidding farewell to these peaceful scenes of study and communion, that though in the world you must expect tribulation, if you are true men and faithful Christians, yet it is given you to have peace at heart by walking and working with God and with Jesus; and to repeat to you, out of a full faith and that gratitude which is the devout heart's memory, the blessed exhortation: "Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

But it is time I came back from these, perhaps somewhat too personal and desultory preludings, to the great central topic or thought round which my words to you will turn, and towards which they will point; which, indeed, has been indirectly implied all along in these preliminary confessions, and to express which I have borrowed the words of an inspired brother (for *we* may certainly, at least without presumption, as children and champions of liberty, call him "*our* brother Paul"), who tells us that every scripture which God has breathed is given "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Of course I do not, and presume you do not, understand these words to refer, in their spirit, to any one calling or class among men: only, while recognizing their application to all men, — all who are called to be kings and priests before the Father of spirits, — we at the same time acknowledge and assert that they speak emphatically to the minister of Christ.

I wish to draw out something of the meaning which lies in this phrase, "man of God," and to express something of the feeling which it should awaken and deepen within us. I wish to show how the minister of Jesus should be eminently the man of God by being eminently and emphatically *man;* and that that is the character in which the Lord of humanity is just now especially calling, by the signs of the times, his servants — even those who are professionally set apart for his service — to clothe themselves.

On this theme I shall take the liberty of saying such words, plain and homely though they should be, as are given me; and you will take them for what they may to you be worth. They come from one, who, during a steady (possibly sometimes stagnant) ministry of nearly a quarter of a century in one parish, has peeped and listened through the loopholes of his insular retreat, as the din and discord of the great Babel of church and state and society went on near and far around him, reading and reflecting that he might gain wisdom for his

own edification, and so, perhaps, for that of others. I cannot, indeed, avoid a doubt, whether a long sabbath of nearly twenty-five years in my Patmos of our New-England Ægean will have entitled me to bring to this school of the prophets any prophetic word suitable to the spiritual conflict of the present age; but I shall trust your thoughtful attention to lay hold of such word of wisdom, as over my head, if not through my own interpretings of my observation and experience, the Spirit may speak.

From all that observation and experience, I have come to the conclusion, that what the holy and humane Spirit of God to-day demands of his Son's ministers is that they should be individually and intensely men; preaching, by their spirit and life especially, the dignity and divinity of manhood.

"The man of God." — Why is the minister called so? or, rather, what is he called to be, when he is called to be that? What is the import of the expression? It is one of a class of titles scattered through the Scriptures, like the phrases, "children of the light," "children of the day," beautiful, but little recognized, traces of the fact that our religion had for its birthplace the region which our German brethren call the *morning-land;* to which no definition, paraphrase, or synonyme, can ever do full justice, and which have had great injustice done them by the narrowness of religionists.

What has been the common understanding of the title, "man of God"? I suppose it conveys to many the idea, chiefly, of the man who officiates in the house of God; and that just as the great ones of this world speak of their valet, for instance, as "my man," so the minister is thought of, under this designation, as God's man, — the man who is set apart and marked to do God's work, and who wears certain badges by which all people are to know him in such capacity. Others, taking a somewhat larger view, may think of the title as denoting the *divine* (so called), because of his being, by presumption at least, a godly man, a man born of God, a man

who comes right from God to the people to minister to them of the things of God. Another mind, ranging somewhat more freely over the field of analogy, might come a little nearer, possibly, to the true *spirit* of the phrase, at least, by remembering that the great and beautiful trees of the mountain and the forest are called, in the Hebrew poetry, the "trees of the Lord." All these ideas may have something of the truth; but none of them quite satisfy the feeling which the grand expression, adopted by Paul from the old prophets, awakens in a thoughtful mind. And this is the conclusion to which my own mind is brought, that, if the minister is called the man of God, it is because he, by excellence, is supposed to embody the divine manhood; because all that is manly and humane is supposed to be in him, as well as by him, singularly magnified and honored.

Various have been, at different periods, the names and titles attached to our profession. Commonest, perhaps, is that of *clergyman;* emphasizing the class of men to which he belongs, and of functions which he formally discharges. Sometimes, though more rarely, he is still called a *divine;* as if he did not need as much to be a *human.* Once the clergyman was spoken of as the parson, the *person* in chief of the parish, the leading figure, because ecclesiastically and socially so recognized: but the hour is coming, yea, and now is, when the minister shall be distinguished as the *man;* his vocation being, among and above all technical and more or less limited pursuits and professions, to express and educate the man, — the man of God, — the godly and manly, the whole, honest, holy, catholic man.

I say, then, that he who would make full proof of his ministry, must make full proof of his manhood. He who would rightly magnify his office as a Christian minister must make supreme account of his mission as a man.

The man of God — the *godly* man, (how that grand old word has been abused by the littleness of pietism!) the

"man after God's own heart" (taking the phrase in the sense which New-Testament piety, not Old-Testament history, gives it) — should be a man of a large heart and of a large life. His ideal should be comprehensive and catholic. In his care to have definiteness and distinctness in the object of his ministry, he should aspire to keep his purpose broad and deep also; remembering that he is a man, and counting nothing human foreign to him; reverently studying the free and flexible way of the Divine Spirit, and the genius of the humane religion of Jesus.

With this view of the scope of the office, I can honestly and heartily welcome you, my friends and brothers, to the Christian ministry to-day; because I feel, that, whether as a sphere of scholarship, as a field of philanthropy, or as a school for personal culture, this is the noblest walk to which a young man is called. And, in what I have to say (necessarily in a somewhat cursory manner) respecting ideals and methods, I shall be thinking of the minister chiefly as a minister of the *truth*, as a *preacher*. The common way is to consider him, first, as preacher; secondly, as pastor; and then, finally, as a man. In my view (though a peculiar temperament and training may make me a defective adviser for others in the matter), the character of preacher, and of the man in the preacher, includes that of pastor: in other words, it is with *truth* the shepherd of the Spirit feeds his flock; by "manifestation of the truth" he wins and warns, and aims to train his hearers to wisdom and to holiness.

My text, indeed, in providing how the man of God may be furnished for "good works," would seem to point to what are called the *practical* duties of the ministerial office. But, if a scholar's writings are his *works*, how emphatically are the efforts of the Christian scholar, to shape the convictions of his mind and heart and whole soul into words of light and fire, his *work!*

"As ye go, preach," is still the message of the Lord. I

know there has long been a disposition in this age to preach down preaching. Like those writers who have handed down their names to posterity, on the title-pages of essays, to prove the vanity of the passion for posthumous fame; or like those who, as old Fuller says, "have a commonplace against commonplace books, and so privately use what publicly they declaim against;" or like Carlyle, who, in one of his "Latter-day Pamphlets," talks most volubly and vehemently against the delusion of supposing that talk is going to cure the malady of the age: so are there many who go about to preach that preaching is a superfluity and a foolishness; only proving thereby that they do ill, what, if done, 'twere well should be well done.

I am aware, indeed, that the objection to preaching, the scepticism with regard to it, lies in many minds, at the present day, not against the mere *fact*, but against the *form*. But has it, then, come to this, that the mere circumstance of our having to speak on a stated day and in a stated place, must, by a manifest destiny, reduce our communication to a mere piece of hypocrisy or slavery or formalism? I *know* that it is possible to refute this; and I believe that you, brothers, mean, with the help of God, to make it more than possible.

It is very true, and a wholesome thing to remember in these days, that mere talk cannot minister to an age diseased. It would seem as if some thought public speech the panacea for moral evil; the sting of invective, the effectual lancet for the ancient sore. Speech does, indeed, often clear thought; but often, also, it creates feeling that confuses thought. It is well to remember that silence, too, has, in some of the most trying cases, not only a healing and a strengthening virtue, but a revealing wisdom. Indignant expression of the wrong may be a relief to the feelings; but the remedy must come from a deeper and a higher source.

But this is only saying, that it is thoughtful talk, and not mere talk, that is to help the needs and troubles of the age.

A man may, we must admit, be full of ideas and arguments, and pour them out as a mighty thinking machine, without being a thoughtful man, — wise to make others wise unto salvation.

With this qualification, and with the understanding also that the life must preach with the lips as well as through them, I still re-assert the importance of the pulpit, and respond to the sentiment of Channing respecting the minister, expressed in one of his unpublished manuscripts, that "his peculiar work is to quicken the community by the promulgation of exalting truth. . . . He is to be a thinker. To this severe toil his life is to be mainly given. . . . These views are important," he adds, "because the age is so much an out-door age. There is little solitary thought anywhere."

From what has been said, your own minds will almost anticipate the suggestion, that the first and foremost work of the Christian preacher is to kindle in his hearers the love of truth; to infect them with that. The man of God must be Truth's man. Not over-anxious to *im*press, but more solicitous to *ex*press the truth, as he has gained it by meditation, prayer, and life; not morbidly anxious to know what becomes of the truth he utters, — let him feel that necessity is laid upon him to be just to his own conviction; and, speaking the truth in simplicity, let him trust it to the God of truth. Let him feel that the maxim, "To thine own self be true," is as sound as if old Polonius had been the bean-ideal of disinterested wisdom. Let him remember that he is not the only channel of Heaven's communications, nor the pulpit the only organ of the divine message, that, the Lord having given the word, great has always been the company of them that published it; and so let him cherish that humility which shall increase, not lessen, his ardor in the cause of truth.

There are three kindred qualities (if, indeed, they should not rather be counted different phases of one and the same quality) which to-day, more than ever, if possible, are needed

to make the ministry, by adding to its faith virtue, equal to the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ who pleads with us to-day in humanity. These three qualities, all having their common root in that reverence for truth and that devotion to truth which I have emphasized, I call *simplicity*, *wisdom*, and *soberness*. By simplicity, I mean not, of course, merely the opposite of duplicity, still less the negative attribute of harmlessness; but that oneness of aim, conditioned by one's having a sufficiently large and lofty mark, which enables him to *wait upon the Lord without distraction*. I mean an unswerving eye to the line of truth; a supreme regard to the question, "What is true?" an absence of the morbid craving for *sensation*, which vitiates so much of the public religion; of the anxiety for what is called *effect* (the very manner of applying the word illustrating the shallowness of the sentiment that so limits its meaning).

Simplicity will also be felt in the minister's doing what I am afraid is too rare: namely, recognizing the safety and the sanctity of natural feelings and a natural tone in the things of God; and discountenancing the unwholesome delusion, that the pulpit must always speak, and the pew listen, sanctimoniously: as if appearance were of any account in comparison with reality.

And simplicity brings *wisdom*, — that noble name, which I exhort you, brothers, by precept and example, to help rescue from the unworthy associations which have gathered about it; to assert and to show that it is not a cold, contracted, selfish conceit or cunning, but a calm, considerate, heavenly sentiment, — a yearning to be filled with all the fulness of that Being who is himself perfect Wisdom; and so to live, that our whole being shall transparently glorify the Father of lights.

In your communings with truth, and your communication of it, as well as in your conversation with the world, "let heaven-eyed" Wisdom "be" your "guide."

I would dwell particularly, for a few moments, on the importanee of clear-sightedness — on that phase of wisdom — in the Christian preacher at the present day.

Imposing are the sophistries, and insinuating the sentimentalities, by which, in these days, the children of light are tempted to become children of the mist, and even the scholar to exchange for a wreath of mist his luminous crown. You surely, brothers, will not be deceived by the axiom so often and so grandiloquently repeated, that finite creatures must not presume to have a full eomprehension of infinite themes. Grant that the objects of faith, themselves, are infinitely above the grasp of the highest intellect: it is nevertheless our privilege and our duty to have a clear idea of *the terms which we adopt in speaking of those objects.* Human words cannot demand that exemption from eriticism which belongs to divine truth. *Mysticism* in the sphere of *sentiment* may be more or less safe; but *mystification* in language is a thing with which a true seholar, a true disciple of the simplieity that is in Christ, should make no terms. *Mystery,* indeed, will and must always *overhang* the field of truth and the road of life; but it is yours, sons of light, to help clear away the *mist from* the field, and espeeially from the road. I say to you, what I once heard Channing say to a young preacher, "Help men to see."

While I am thus contending for the importance of the religious teacher's keeping a clear mind (which I am disposed to go beyond De Wette in calling more than a *virtue of the intellect*), let me draw one illustration of my meaning among many from a familiar topie; in regard to which, it seems to me, Unitarianism, in its strictness, needs to be re-affirmed, and kept persistently before the mind. I confess, I eannot quite see how some among us can treat with such a tender toleration the doetrine, or at least the name, of a Trinity; how they can see any good, any use, in the name whatever. I will not acknowledge myself behind any in tenderness for the feelings of the weaker brethren, who are so "born or taught"

as to identify their most sacred hopes with that mystic name. For their sake, I would indulge in no ridicule with regard to it: but Christian manliness constrains me to say, that I cannot, for the life of me, see any more reason for venerating a *sacred Three* than a *sacred Seven;* even for ascribing any sanctity or special significance to the idea of a Threeness in the divine manifestation. It appears to me, at least a superfluous, and I must think it an unsafe, tampering with the Trinitarian formula, suited to confuse Unitarianism, and to give countenance and heart to its adversaries, to be even willing to keep the name of "Trinity," when all that we mean by it is three several and successive ways of God's declaration of himself; still less ground is there for the mystifying intimation, that we hold to a Trinity, when, after all, it resolves itself into an infinite God, a perfect man, and a special system of divine agencies and influences.

Certainly I believe that the names, Father, Son, and Spirit, denote each a peculiar phase of the divine manifestation: but so does Nature; so does the Word, no less than the Spirit. Why limit the forms of God's agency to three? The philosophy which does this, is, in my opinion, more nice than wise: it is a philosophy after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. It makes the formal override the spiritual. If we learn our Christianity right from Christ, how can we talk of the Spirit, or even the Son, as designating any new element which is not implied in the term "Father," when we once feel that the Spirit is the Father of spirits, and that Christ came to remind us, that, in every man, the Spirit of the Father has always dwelt and worked? I cannot conceive how we can even *suppose* a formal distribution of divine ageney, such as the term "Trinity" implies, without marring the simplicity and spirituality of a true Christian faith.

It is said, I know, that only by recognizing a profound truth as lying under the formula of the Trinity can we justify

the providence of God in church-history. Yes; but only in the sense in which we show our recognition of God in history by acknowledging a struggling and yearning after the confessing of the Divine Oneness amidst the mythology of the *heathen* world. But shall we, therefore, talk of the *Gods* in serious faith and solemn form?

Pardon me for dwelling so long on a single illustration. I return to the general ground of the importance, in all such matters, of a clear, calm, consistent, rational faith. We have long maintained that religion is a reasonable (literally a *logical*) service; what we want now, I think, is to say and feel that reason is a religious faculty and responsibility, and to take the positive ground that the cause of reason *is* the cause of religion.

I am prepared to hear it said, that to preach the importance of light, in this age, is carrying coals to Newcastle. We are so used to calling this pre-eminently an age of light, that we too easily take for granted it is so; and many sink to sleep in the pleasant delusion. Doubtless the means of light are abundant enough; but these do not of themselves bring, still less force upon men, the wisdom to use the means for the great end of having the light within their own convictions, as a possession, an attribute, of their very being.

And what I have said of light may also be said of liberty. If some are dazzled with excess of light, because they have not taken the light *into* them, and others are drunk with excess of liberty, — though I do not admit that there can be too much of a good thing, — and thus many are alarmed, and begin to feel a wavering of faith in the great principles of reason and freedom, then, it seems to me, is the very time to re-affirm that we are not to go backward for salvation, but to go forward into a higher light and a larger liberty.

The third requisite I named, of a manly ministry, was soberness; by which I mean, not a sepulchral sanctimoniousness of visage — (sadness is no more sacred than gladness:

there is such a thing as *solemn joy*) — not a quality to be *measured* by the *length* of the countenance ; but another and a very different quality, which *measures* the *depth* of what a man has within him of the real soul of godliness. I mean, by sobriety, the even balance and symmetrical roundness of a manly character.

Will it be said that all this is but cold inculcation for an age of active humanity? The self-respect and self-culture which I am urging imply any thing but the prudential consideration of selfishness. The simplicity I preach is the simplicity of self-devotion ; the soberness is the soberness of self-mastery ; the wisdom, that of "a wise and understanding *heart*." It makes the —

> "Expanded soul disclaim
> The narrow view, the selfish aim ;
> And, with a Christian zeal, embrace
> Whate'er is friendly to our race."

While, then, I maintain the supreme importance, in the minister, of allegiance to truth, I also admit and assert that he must, indeed, cultivate that sympathy, not only with truth, but with human souls, which shall make his pulpit performance, not a mere invitation to the audience to sit as spectators of an intellectual battle enacted upon a field of white paper, and admirers of the skill with which he draws out his forces, but a real laying hold upon the souls before him as themselves engaged in a battle, as a church militant, whom he would lead onward to conflict and to victory.

Feeling this love of souls *with* his love of truth, he will be guarded against an error which seems to have prevailed not a little in these days, — that of imagining that the Christian preacher of truth and righteousness stands up to speak to mankind, or at least to a nation at large, upon great public sins and duties ; the simple truth being, that while, indeed, he must speak from and to humanity, it is humanity as incarnated and struggling in the special congregation to which he ministers.

In addressing them, indeed, he must take no narrow view of their civil and human relations; but, however he may be called to recognize remote relations, the moral of the survey will ever be its revelation of the duty which, at his providential post, each man has to do.

Nor, again, does our position, that the preacher's first duty is truth to himself, make it the less a reasonable thing for him to consider *what the truth is* which he shall deliver, as well as to whom he addresses it.

How vast is the complex theme that rises before the preacher as often as he stands up to utter the word of life! Our fathers in the ministry used to insist, that, in every sermon, he must declare the whole counsel of God. I remember one piece of admonition, given me by a venerable father, which always seemed to me eminently defective: "Preach as a dying man to dying men, and as if each sermon were to be your last." Certainly every man, whatever his calling, ought always to be speaking and acting as purely and simply as if he were in the world of spirits; but to say that the preacher is not to assume that he will have more than to-day to complete his message, is simply to torment his mind with the requirement of an impossibility. And then, instead of speaking as a dying man to dying men, the minister of Christ should speak as a living man to men who ought to be living in all the fair and full proportions of a live manhood, in the whole spirit of Christian truth and Christian motive, in full sympathy with many-sided humanity. And here, too, I think the age admonishes the minister of the need of that true soberness which we have made so prominent as an expression of the manhood of a Christian ministry. In this, eminently, is the inspired Scripture fitted to make the man of God *perfect and complete;* namely, by the soberness which its large style of presenting truth imparts to the mind. The minister of the divine word, I will not say should be an *eclectic*, because that word has unfortunate associations; and I would not be sup-

posed to indulge the idea, that the servant of the truth should flit about as a *dilettante* over the surface of doctrine and sentiment: but what I say is, that he should keep himself so at the centre of the world of thought, that he can fairly survey and appreciate all the tendencies of human thought, and do generous justice to all religious ideas. So far am I, then, from contending, in my plea for moderation, that a man should be always skipping to and fro, in his utterance of the truth, to trim and balance his statements; what I maintain is, that he should be so fixed upon grand central truths and principles, that he not only cannot, but need not, do any such tormenting work, every one seeing and feeling where his soul is established. And let me express my opinion here, that our brother Clarke, in his defence of Theodore Parker's limitations as a preacher, when quoting Goethe's remark, that "care is taken that trees shall not grow up to heaven," he uses it as illustrating that "God does not mean nor require that every man shall do every thing," does not quite hit the moral of the fact to which his German authority refers. Care *is* taken that trees shall not spend all their strength in one direction; and so God would have human mind and taste and character not run to the greatest possible height in any one narrow range, but grow broadly over the earth, as well as loftily into the skies. Thus the illustration, instead of suggesting an apology for the limitation, rather urges the liberalizing of each man's zeal and effort in the cause of culture and of charity.

Among the various questions of the day, in regard to which the soberness, the justness, of intellectual perspective I have recommended will prove a grand guide through the maze of perplexity, I have time to instance only the ever-recurring triangular controversy between the Bible, the church, and the soul.

In this matter, I believe in going right to the high ground of Christian simplicity, — the gospel-records, the Christ of the evangelists. This course does not, as is often alleged,

cut us off from church-fellowship. Grant that the gospel, as a matter of history, comes to us through the church (I should rather say, *has* come to us): here it is; and why take tradition as an additional authority to tell us what the gospel is? If Strauss and Pusey should combine to convince me that I could not consistently depend upon the Christ of the gospel without first acknowledging the authority of the church, and I had no other reply, no other escape, — tossed between the horns of such a dilemma, — I would fall back upon the first principles of religion, and say, like Burns's noble friend, who derived the patent of his honors immediately from the Almighty: The Christian gets his inspiration, not in a horizontal, but in a vertical line of descent; not from behind, through a succession of ecclesiastical functionaries, but from within and from above, out of the fulness of the ever-present God.

But I must hasten to remind you (though I need hardly do more than remind you), that the soberness and catholicity of spirit that express the true minister's manhood in God and Christ, become him, not only in the pulpit, but in the whole walk and work of his life. Of all men, the Christian minister needs a healthy mind in a healthy body. He has to be all things to all men; to weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that rejoice; to be young with the young, and old with the old. He has to be able to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and yet he must have that tender sympathy which shall enable him to say with Paul, "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" that quick susceptibility which shall make it equally true for him to say of himself, "Who is offended, and I burn not?"

And what shall enable the minister at the present day to fulfil all this? Not, I think, ever so strong a sense of clerical propriety and clerical solemnity: nothing but a renewed sense of the sacredness of his own manhood, and of the humanity around him, which God and Christ commend to the generous

sympathies of his nature. What is wanted is, not a class of men who shall *walk mournfully* (or, as the original has it, *in black*) *before the Lord of hosts;* who, —

> "Solemn and stern, as o'er dead virtue mourning,
> Shall go in black-dressed ranks:" —

but one and another, and yet another, example of that true and loving spirit which —

> "Walks with man from day to day
> As with a brother and a friend."

Brothers, even the meagre outlines I have thus presented to you of the Christian minister's office have recalled to your minds the picture of no light task. The ministry God has given us is a great work, — great in its ideal, great in its labor, great in its issues. The age has gone by, at least for us, when, with a body of divinity all prepared to his hands, — by creed, catechism, and council, — the minister had only to divide a written word of truth according to the lines marked out for him; and, undisturbed by any questionings of his own or the world's progressive spirit, could quietly and comfortably jog on in his round of sermonizing and catechizing and parish gossiping, with scarcely sensitiveness enough to feel the growing indifference of his flock to his monotonous communications. The character and circumstances of the present age increase, especially in our part of the church, the difficulties and perplexities of the profession for a soul that wishes to be free of all, and yet a servant of all. You, brothers, like most of us, will probably be understood to go forth to your ministry as belonging in an especial manner to one denomination or department of the church; at the very least, to the Liberal wing of the great army. But, after all, if you go in the spirit of the Master, you will feel that your grand, all-transcending (I had almost said, all-absorbing) relation is that of individual men, presenting your own personal convictions; not any creed or system which you are expected

to uphold by virtue of an ecclesiastical relation, but simply such truth as you, endeavoring to stand in honest relations with your own souls, feel it to be necessary for men in their life-relations — moral, social, spiritual, and eternal — to believe and practise. In other words, you will feel that the people need you, not to tell them that which they themselves know, but that which you yourselves believe; that what they really want, whether they fancy so or not, is not one who shall eloquently echo their own prejudices and inclinations, but one who shall, by the infection of his spirit, stir, and, if need be, startle them to be ever returning to the well of wisdom supplied by the fount of self-communion. With this estimate of the ministry committed to you, not so much by man as by God, you will perhaps make less account than is often done of statistical show, of numerical church increase, of those arrays of figures which occupy so prominent a place generally in reports of the progress and prosperity of the churches. You will, at all events, feel that the best effects and tests of the preacher's exertions are not those which can be estimated by the worldly eye, but those which, being spiritual, must be spiritually discerned. Your great aim will be to communicate a worthier and wholesomer idea of religion than what has been too common in the world, and even in the church, by exhibiting it in its just relations; taking it out of the charmed circle (or rather corner) of sentimental, sectarian, dogmatic, or superstitious associations, and restoring it to its legitimate place at the centre of life, in the domain of natural and manly feeling. Much as you may feel, and must feel, the want of a right faith in the unity of the Divine Being, you will surely feel yet more the need of faith in the unity of human things, as fitted, under God's overruling and all-guiding providence, to train man up to the oneness of a religious life.

The views and principles I have been advocating, might, if adopted, not insure what those, who are anxious to make

a fair show in the flesh, would call a successful ministry; what this world, however, even the ecclesiastical, calls success, is not the measure of success in the kingdom of Heaven.

If it were proper now to supply the defects of this protracted attempt to put together, by pieces and hints, the picture of a manly minister, — a true man of God, — with a living example, there is one amongst us, whom, with the warmest love, the deepest gratitude, and the maturest reverence, my heart would leap to name; one whose clear, hearty, and weighty tone of voice and mind gave me the strongest impression which I retain from early years of the majestic beauty of sober truth and symmetrical character; whose presence and preaching early and powerfully stirred in me the conviction, which has grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength, how possible it is, how beautiful, and devoutly to be desired, that, in the minister of religion, the priest and the clergyman should be transcended and absorbed by the man; whose word and walk, from that time to this, have deepened these my early impressions; the Christian philosopher and gentleman, who has just retired from the latest sphere of his manly ministration to Christ and the church, and whom the hearts of thousands follow to his retirement with affectionate respect, gratitude and congratulation.

But I turn from the living to the great army of ministers and martyrs who have finished their course below. How noble an exemplification of many points in my subject would the manly Robertson furnish! But from the number of our own departed fellow-graduates there comes back at this hour to my memory the image of a fellow-student of my own, whom I remember twenty-five years ago, as he sat in that little chamber at Divinity Hall, bending over his huge folios; and who, after a toilsome and thorny service, has, within a few months, been translated to that clearer vision, for which, through the dust of this building-ground and the smoke of

this battle-field, his noble heart yearned and strove. This brother of ours, as the tender respect, and even reverence, with which men of most differing creeds speak of him departed touchingly testify, whatever may have been his errors of opinion or expression, presented a memorable example of the honest preacher and the faithful pastor combined with the earnest patriot and philanthropist; and the manner in which his death has affected men of all sects and parties shows that the instincts of the heart recognize the soundness of the principle, which seems to me one of the great lessons of our brother's life, — that the man makes the minister. If, as a theologian and as a reformer, he had, in his theories and in his temper, observed more than he did at times the great law of continence and charity; if his sense of justice, so justifiably quick and prominent, had been sometimes finer and *more* thorough-going; if he had remembered always the noble word of Shakspeare, that *he who does more than may become a man is less than a man;* if he had only refrained from thrusting the shadow of his own personality at times in the way of the light his reflecting mind flashed upon the world's ways and men's characters; if he had only, in short, been as just to the requirements of simplicity and sobriety (in a word, of true manliness) as he was sensitive to certain glaring forms of wrong against humanity, — I believe, that, so far from being weakened thereby, his mighty influence would have been stronger, wider, and deeper. But he has gone to that world of light where no mists of passion crook or color the pure, white beam of truth: he has gone to learn more of the great Master, more of the patience of the Lord, than even he knew here below; and to be perfectly taught in that "more excellent way." So far as our own personal feelings are concerned, when we think of the mass of moral inertia and iniquity around us; when we think, it may be, of our own lukewarmness, — we may well pardon something, nay, much, to the spirit of indignation stirring a heart of flesh

against the inconsistencies and indifference of Christendom. Only it is still our duty, even though we condemn ourselves thereby, to lift up high the broad standard of a clear and complete manhood: and I believe our brother, if he could now speak to us in articulate words, would exhort us to "add to faith, courage; and to courage, knowledge; and to knowledge, sobriety; and to sobriety, patience; and to patience, piety; and to piety, brotherly affection; and to brotherly affection, charity."

Brothers, one more of our number has joined the great cloud of witnesses that admonish us of the grandeur of our calling and the dimensions of our work. Subdued and sustained at once by such memories and such a presence, let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking to him, the Captain of our profession, the perfect man of God, — the man Christ Jesus; in his strength be faithful unto death, — yea, even the death of every narrow spirit, every selfish anxiety and ambition; and receive the crown of life which the Lord shall give to all them that love his appearing, and rejoice to be themselves nothing, if He may live in them and through them in the world.

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